

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 1st June 2020 at 7.00 pm
by remote attendance due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Present:

Councillors: Mr P Butterworth (Chair), Mr I Martin, Mrs J Smith-Haddon, Mr K Morton, County Councillor L Brown, Mrs J McKenna.

Also in attendance:

Mrs H Counsell (Clerk to the Council)

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He acknowledged that once again, due to government restrictions on attendance at meetings it had to be held remotely. Unfortunately the public were still unable to be involved in this meeting which was via Microsoft Teams, but Councillors were pleased to note that residents had taken the opportunity to raise issues beforehand with either the Clerk, their ward Councillor or County Councillor and would encourage them to continue to do so until open meetings are able to be held again.

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

Councillor Dr J Grose.

2. Issues raised by members of the public.

Four e-mails were received and the contents considered under Planning Item 7.2.

3. To consider applications for two co-opted vacancies in the Shirenewton ward and one vacancy in the Earlswood ward.

There were none despite the vacancies being advertised every month in the Parish Magazine. Clerk to produce an advert to be placed on the website, Facebook, Parish Magazine and community noticeboards.

4. To receive the monthly police report.

17/5/2020 – Report of 2 off road bikes in Wentwood Forest earlier in the day.

19/5/2020 – Report of a car entered on Chapel Lane, Earlswood. The owner of the vehicle was working in a nearby field and left the vehicle insecure. A CD player was taken from the dashboard. No other damage caused.

There were no reports of outbuildings broken into/thefts since last month's report, apart from the above.

Council further noted the report of the Rural Crime Operation held from 17th April to 10th May 2020. The Council had already circulated this report to residents

5. Minute 3962 - To disclose personal and pecuniary interests in listed business.

County Cllr L Brown took no part in the discussion or voting on the planning applications as she is a member of Mon CC's Planning Committee.

6. Minute 3963 - To confirm and sign minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2020.

These minutes were confirmed as a true record by e-mail response, to be signed by the Chair on 2 June 2020.

7. Minute 3964 - To consider planning matters.

DM/2020/00380 Little Grondra Farm, Shirenewton

Use of existing access and new garage.

Councillors recalled the previous application to convert the milking parlour to a residence, and that that conversion was proceeding. There had been concern over the proposed new access from the road to serve only the converted milking parlour. The current application sought to share the main access to the farm and in consequence the double garage was to be built on the farmyard side of the conversion. Construction to be of stone and slate. Council's recommendation was for approval. (Voting: Approval 5).

DM/2020/00390 Gaerllwyd Farm, Newchurch

Change of use of existing agricultural building to B1 use.

Councillors recalled the application last year for change of use to B1, B2 and B8 (DM/2019/01158 which was withdrawn). They further noted two large agricultural barns behind the original Gaerllwyd Farmhouse which fronts onto the B road at the Gaerllwyd road junction. The barns are accessible from the road which leads off from the junction to Newchurch and Devauden. The road, which is a narrow country lane, rises from the junction and then follows the line of the ridge so the barns are quite visible for some distance across the Mouton valley and beyond. The local characteristic is deeply rural and the site is prominent in the landscape

The application did not satisfy Policy RE3 as there is no existing enterprise disclosed in the application to which this business activity could contribute nor is there a business case in support to demonstrate the benefits of the proposal to sustain employment and/or the local economy because the nearest local settlement is Shirenewton village some 3 miles distant and no significant housing pool which might provide employees and benefit from the new activity within 8 miles. The lack of public transport (confined to a single sparse bus service) will compel employees and customers to travel by car contrary to Welsh Government policy.

No independent structural survey had been provided to demonstrate that the building is suitable for conversion.

The local telephone exchange had still not been updated, there is no fibre cabling and consequently broadband speeds are minimal and unsuited to business use.

There was no report from the Highways Department. Highway safety would be compromised by the site access being from a single track country road around 100m from the main road junction. The application site is clearly a subdivision of the original farmyard and the granting of planning permission would set a precedent for the remaining half with all that that implies for a much larger development. No toilets or washing facilities were proposed.

The bat report was undertaken in winter when bats are in hibernation. A further survey in spring/ summer time should be provided as bats have been observed in the immediate vicinity. The bat report further indicated that the roof is in a poor state of repair and the application lacked detail in the necessary repairs including any upgrading or roof lights.

The application lacked detail of external lighting and roof lights, and the steps to be taken to ensure there is no light disturbance to residents, wild life and the dark skies.

No time, noise, machinery operation or vehicle movement restrictions were proposed and these are needed to protect the rural and residential surroundings in the event that MCC grants consent.

Council was not against refurbishment of this building but felt this application was not suitable in this very rural location.

Recommendation: Refusal. (Voting: Refusal 5). Council further agreed that if this application goes to Mon CC Planning Committee for consideration then a Council member would attend.

8. Minute 3965 – Finance

a) To approve the following payments:

Expenditure (by Standing Order)

Clerk's salary/allowances -	May 2020	£659.20
Clerk's Pension (Council & Clerk's contribution) -	May 2020	£236.95
(Includes £58.33 towards £700 pa LGPS pension deficit)		

Payments

Payee	Reason for expenditure	Amount £	Vat £	Total	Cheque No.
Mrs H Counsell	Expenses – May 2020	21.45	0	21.45	101565
Merlin Waste Invoice 4117	Bin emptying - May	39.00	0	39.00	101566
Age Cymru Gwent	Internal Auditor's annual fee	100.00	0	100.00	101567
BHIB Insurance Broker	Annual Insurance	668.35	0	668.35	101571
Information Commissioners Office	Annual Data Protection fee	40.00	0	40.00	101572

Council approved all payments as listed.

Council noted that due to overpayment of the PAYE account, a credit is to be issued by HMRC by the end of July of £656.74.

b) to approve and sign the quarterly financial report (January – March 2020)

The quarterly report was duly approved, to be signed by Cllr Smith-Haddon on 2 June 2020.

c) to approve and sign the Statement of Accounts for 2019/20

The Statement of Accounts was approved, to be signed by the Chair on 2 June 2020.

d) to agree an additional signature on the bank mandate.

Cllr J Smith-Haddon agreed to be an additional signature on the mandate, Clerk to arrange the paperwork. Also to investigate the process for online banking.

9. Minute 3966 – To consider a response to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales on its consideration of the Electoral Review in Monmouthshire (closing date 21.6.20).

Councillors had received maps of the proposed boundary changes from the Chair and felt there was no alternative but to vote 'Yes' to the proposal that the Boundary Commission continue with the review of electoral arrangements in Monmouthshire.

10. Minute 3967 – Reports from the County Councillor and the Clerk

County Councillor's Report:

County Councillor Brown advised:

Waste Collection

The County Council has resumed garden waste collection, the week commencing the 25th of May for those with permits. The Household waste site at Five Lanes re-opened on the 26th of May, restricted currently, for those residents with hazardous waste and based on a booking system, full details of which can be found on the MCC website including site rules to maintain social distancing:

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/household-waste-recycling-centres>

County Council 4th of June 2020

The County Council will hold a virtual meeting on the 4th of June. The agenda items include a WG loan to refit MCC buildings to save long term energy bills and reduce carbon, an update of the Licensing Policy and the annual report of the Chief Education Officer. The Annual Education report comments on the February 2020 Estyn report for Monmouthshire CC which overall was a good report and in terms of improvement made the following recommendation:

- R1- Improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals:
- R2-Further strengthen the focus on increasing the number of pupils achieving excellent standards;
- R3- Articulate a clear strategy for SEN provision;
- R4-Strengthen the use of information gathered for self-evaluation to better inform improvement planning.

Full details of the agenda items for the County Council meeting can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MId=4586>

Clerk's Report:

Hill View Cottage, Shirenewton –Enforcement case open – E19/130. Non Material Amendment application for velux roof lights and slated canopies received 18.10.19. Community Council approved canopies but recommended refusal of velux rooflights at November 2019 meeting. Application refused by Mon CC.

Damaged planter at Blethyn Close - Mon CC agreed to remove and replace the damaged concrete planter at their own cost as it is on their land – reminder sent 28.5.19 and 25.7.19 and 23.9.19 and 25.10.19 – J Wassal, Mon CC to put on works schedule w/c 27.1.2020.

Play area –Refurbishment and painting of play equipment completed and payment of £810.00 + vat agreed at May meeting. Play area post and wire fence has been replaced with railings as agreed (invoice not yet received). Play area locked, hall and car park still closed to the public due to the current pandemic.

Installation of steps alongside The Spout – quote of £250 received from Mr J Saysell to install steps at the left hand side of The Spout. Council resolved to accept this quote. £50 contributed towards costs by WI.

Asset maintenance – work still ongoing on the repair of the squeeze belly gates at the war memorial, also additional handrail at the top of the funeral path has been installed.

Mobile Post Office – mobile service no longer running in current COVID-19 lockdown.

MESh Voluntary Group – contacted the organiser regarding SCC funding up to £100 of purchases. They may set up a permanent voluntary community group in the future and will get back in touch if so. SCC grant application form forwarded.

Footpath 30 – Earlswood Road to Newton Manor – poor condition of top part of path reported to Mon CC Footpaths Officer on 16.3.20. Report No: 09961. Footpaths Officer agreed and will arrange repair.

Footpath 35 – Eddystone/The Chantry – reported electric fence across path 27.5.20. Report no: 16131 currently with Enforcement Officer.

My Monmouthshire reports -

Damaged road sign at West End, Earlswood – Report No: 5020558 – work completed but sign fell off after 2 weeks, reported again and repaired on 19.5.20.

Report to police of car parked in closed recreation hall car park on 30.5.20

11. Minute 3968 - Items of local concern –

- It was reported that a Planning Officer had attended the site of a gateway being enlarged at the junction of the B4235 and Weyloed Lane, Mynyddbach and advised the landowner that planning permission was required. Landowner to reinstate gateway and consider applying for planning permission. Chair to check.
- Footpath 167 at West End – a complaint had been made regarding bikes using this footpath and a sign had been erected saying 'No Motorbikes'. Another resident was unhappy with this signage as he believed there was unrestricted access. Cllr Morton to pursue.
- It was noted that the grass on the recreation field had been cut on 27.5.20.
- It was reported that the gates at either end of the footpath through the SAMFAL fields were in a poor condition. Clerk to report to Mon CC.
- Council was reminded that the hedges along the Earlswood Road at Mynders Farm had not been replaced, although work should have been completed by the end of April. Clerk to follow up with Welsh Government.

12. Minute 3969 - To receive correspondence as per attached schedule.

Council noted receipt of the following correspondence:

Covid 19 arrangements during lockdown - Various information, amended regulations and guidelines on holding virtual meetings, finance and governance during the coronavirus outbreak from the Welsh Government, Wales Audit Office, One Voice Wales and departments of Mon CC.

E-mail on 1.6.20 from Marie Curie explaining the increase in their end of life care and support due to the current pandemic and requesting a donation. No donation made as they do not provide a service in Monmouthshire.

Welsh Government

20.5.20 – information received on SuDS - amendments to two Orders on Sustainable Drainage.

WG Consultations

Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs.

13. Minute 3970 - Date of next meeting Monday 6th July 2020 at 7.00pm at the Recreation Hall, Shirenewton if the lockdown is lifted, if not, the meeting will be by Councillors remote attendance.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.35 pm.